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HEADLINE: Preaching, not puffing;
Born-again quitters seek 'converts';
But smokers still resist the message

BYLINE: Kim Painter

BODY:

Whenever a company hires Robert Rosner to negotiate a smoking ban, employees ask if Rosner is an ex-smoker. He isn't.

'At one place, I said that and a man stood up and said, 'Thank God, you're not one of them,' says Rosner, director of Seattle's Smoking Policy Institute.

But Dallas star Larry Hagman is one of them, and proud of it. So is New York model David Goerlitz, who once made \$ 75,000 a year posing for macho Winston cigarette ads. And so is Kenneth E. Warner, senior scientific editor on a new smoking report out today from Surgeon General C. Everett Koop.

They're all ex-smokers who, like converted sinners, have gone over to the born-again camp and taken up preaching - hoping their still-puffing brothers and sisters will join them in the smoke-free tent.

That tent has become more crowded each year since 1964, when then-Surgeon General Luther L. Terry first proclaimed smoking hazardous to health. Since then, the anti-smoking movement has put warnings on cigarette packs, taken cigarette advertisements off TV and made smoking a social sin in some circles.

As Koop issues new warnings today, he addresses a nation where at least 1.3 million smokers kick the habit each year and where the number of ex-smokers (roughly 40 million) approaches the number of current smokers (roughly 50 million.)

If trends continue, ex-smokers will outnumber smokers before the year 2000, says Dr. Michael Fiore of the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

Fiore's research shows that by 1985, 44 percent of those who ever smoked were ex-smokers; among all college graduates who'd ever smoked, 57 percent had quit - a sign that forswearing nicotine isn't just healthy, it's fashionable, at least at the highest socioeconomic levels.

Like any fashionable group, ex-smokers can seem a bit self-important to outsiders.

'There's just an air of superiority,' says Dave Brenton, 34, of Mesa, Ariz., an 18-year smoker who heads the 1,600-member Smoker's Rights Alliance.

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"It's annoying how some of these ex-smokers acquire an extreme sensitivity to being around people who smoke."

But the ex-smokers' club is anything but an exclusive clique: Members seek recruits.

Hagman, 57, is perhaps the best-known recruiter.

A smoker for 20 years, he quit in 1964 after a double scare: An Italian doctor told him he was killing himself, and a few months later, the first surgeon general's warning came out.

"When I saw it in print, I believed it," Hagman says.

Today, Hagman is a spokesman for the American Cancer Society and chairman of the annual Great American Smokeout.

He prohibits smoking on the set of Dallas - "I have the clout to do that," he says - and has a sign on the front door of his home that reads "Thank you for not smoking in the house."

Those policies have led many of his friends and co-workers to quit, Hagman says.

Goerlitz, 39, who posed for Winston from 1982 to 1986, was in the business of getting people to smoke - or, at least, to smoke Winstons (cigarette companies say advertisements are meant to influence brand choices, not to recruit new smokers).

But when he broke his own 24-year, three-pack-a-day tobacco addiction in November - after visiting a cancer ward and seeing dozens of lung cancer patients - he decided he couldn't leave it at that.

"I felt directly responsible for helping to cause (thousands) of people a day to start smoking ... I felt very guilty," Goerlitz says.

So Goerlitz decided to become an anti-smoking crusader, offering his help to whoever would take it.

A group called Citizens Against Tobacco Smoke (CATS) has accepted his offer, and this week will begin distributing radio and television spots in which Goerlitz describes himself as a former "drug pusher" for nicotine.

In the spots, Goerlitz says: "I was used by a major cigarette company to make smoking glamorous, and it's a lie. Smoking kills a thousand people every day - more than AIDS, suicides and traffic accidents combined."

Warner, an economist and health policy analyst at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, quit his own habit in 1974. He'll join Koop in presenting today's report.

He says it's what he's learned since quitting that has convinced him to speak out against smoking: "I don't think you can study this issue for long without developing a strong point of view."

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He says smoking is "a tragedy of massive proportions" that kills 100 times as many people each year as all illegal drugs put together.

But, he adds: "I'm not an anti-smoker - I'm anti-smoking."

Not all ex-smokers are public crusaders, of course. Most confine their efforts to friends and co-workers.

That's the case with Dr. Robert Windom, 58, a physician who smoked for 30 years, but quit a few years before becoming the nation's assistant secretary for health in 1986.

"I do get on my friends who smoke, give them a nudge - but it's a friendly nudge. I don't want to tell anyone how to live their life," Windom says.

Former smoker William Weeks, 36, a manufacturing plant manager in Calhoun, Ga., takes a gentle but firm approach: "I try to be very cordial and first of all ask them not to smoke in my car or my house or around me. Most people are receptive to that ... I also include a small sermon on passive smoke, the fact that their smoke can cause health problems for me.

"I'm never ugly about it. If I'm around someone who is terribly addicted, I try to be understanding."

Labor relations manager Emily Evans of Seattle quit her 22-year habit in August 1987, and finds she has few friends who need converting: "Smoking is considered highly antisocial behavior among my friends and co-workers."

But when smokers do come to her home, she offers ashtrays.

"I think I'm more tolerant than I would have been if I'd never smoked," Evans says. "When I look at smokers, I feel compassion and I want to help them, but I know that it has to be an individual decision."

Rosner - whose Smoking Policy Institute helped set up a smoking ban at Evans' company - says many ex-smokers could take compassion lessons from people like Evans.

"I've seen some pretty incredible ex-smokers in my day. There are many who are not supportive - they're insulting, they lay on guilt trips," says Rosner, who always puts equal numbers of smokers, non-smokers and ex-smokers on committees planning smoking policies.

Smokers "need support, not sarcasm and guilt," Rosner says.

He says ex-smokers must consider that not everyone can quit the way they quit - whether it was with hypnotism or nicotine gum - because not everyone smokes for the same reasons. Some are addicted to nicotine; others smoke out of habit.

And many smokers just aren't ready to quit, Rosner says: "Ex-smokers really have a responsibility to remember what it was like."

TEXT OF GRAPHIC

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Quitters on the rise

By the year 2000, experts expect the number of former cigarette smokers to outnumber smokers.

Year	Smokers (1)	Ex-smokers (1)
(in millions)	(in millions)	
1974	59.67	32.32
1985	48.79	39.92

COMPLETE TEXT NOT AVAILABLE

(1) Adjusted number of smokers, based on population in 1985

Source: Journal of the American Medical Association

GRAPHIC: color, Elys McLean-Ibrahim, USA TODAY, Source: Journal of the American Medical Association (graph), PHOTO; color, John Lei (David Goerlitz)

CUTLINE: FELT RESPONSIBLE: David Goerlitz, who made smoking look macho in Winston ads, broke his 24-year, three-pack-a-day tobacco addiction in November, after visiting lung cancer patients in the hospital. He has now switched camps, and crusades against smoking.

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